



CONGRESSMAN GARY ACKERMAN

REPORT TO RESIDENTS, 5th District

Summer 2002

Working for Queens, Nassau and Suffolk Counties

District Report



The President and Congressman Ackerman in an oval office ceremony, unveiling the new World Trade Center “Heroes” postage stamp, a measure sponsored by Ackerman in Congress. Also (l to r) are Postmaster General Jack Potter, NYC Firefighters Bill Eisengrein, George Johnson, Dan McWilliams and the picture’s Photographer Thomas Franklin.

World Trade Center Stamp

In an Oval Office ceremony on March 11, President Bush and Congressman Gary Ackerman unveiled a new World Trade Center postage stamp. The revenue from this stamp will help the widows, orphans and families of the rescue workers killed in the September 11th attack. Congressman Ackerman introduced the stamp legislation in the House one week following the attack. The measure was signed into law by President Bush as part of an appropriations package. The stamp features the now-famous photo of three New York City Firefighters raising an American flag from rubble of the twin towers. The officers pictured are

fireman Danny McWilliams of Long Island, George Johnson of Queens and Bill Eisengrein of Staten Island. All three were also on-hand as were U.S. Postmaster General Jack Potter and the photographer, Thomas Franklin at the White House ceremony.

Formally named “Heroes of 2001,” this new stamp will be the second in U.S. history to raise funds for a special cause—the breast cancer stamp in 1998 was the first—and will cost 45 cents and will be valid for postage in the amount of the first-class letter rate.

The idea for the law creating the stamp came from Michael Kessel, who told Corey Ackerman, who, of course, told his dad.

Ackerman To Palestinian Authority: **Fight Terrorism or Face Sanctions**

As conflict in the Middle East escalates, Congress has increasingly begun to consider measures to impose sanctions on the Palestinian Authority (PA) for its failure to combat terrorism. Spurred by revelations that the Israeli Army had recovered documents showing Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat had personally signed memos allocating funds for members of the Fatah movement’s Tanzim militia and the so-called Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, Representative

Ackerman acquired copies of the original incriminating documents and circulated them with English translations to every Member of the House of Representatives.

Ackerman’s bill, the Middle East Peace Commitments Act (H.R. 1795), continues to draw widely bipartisan support from both Republicans and Democrats, with 157 cosponsors to date. The bill would require the President to report to Congress on whether the PA was living up to its commitment to a



Congressman Ackerman meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon at his official residence in Jerusalem where the two discussed the region’s increased wave of violence and terrorism as well as how to revive the Middle East peace process.

non-violent resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, or was continuing to dodge serious attempts at peace, as it has done for half a century. If the President is unable to certify Palestinian compliance, he would then have to impose sanctions or utilize a national security waiver. Action on the bill will next come in the House International Relations Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, where Ackerman is the Ranking Member.

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Gary R. Ackerman

M.C.

Presort Standard





Remembering 9-11



Congressman Ackerman visits the Bayside Kiwanis Club's 9-11-01 memorial overlooking the Bayside Long Island Railroad station after discussing America's war on terrorism and the rebuilding of the World Trade Center with constituents along Bell Boulevard.

Congressman Ackerman: Protecting The Environment

Terrorist attacks and the current turmoil in the Middle East mean we must limit our nation's dependence on foreign sources of oil. Representative Ackerman supports programs that will promote energy efficiency and conservation, and reduce our dependence on fossil fuels thereby protecting our environment as well as ensuring our nation's energy security.

During the consideration of the President's energy bill, Congressman Ackerman championed an amendment

to prohibit drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge – the pristine and irreplaceable wilderness that must be permanently protected from oil exploration and other damaging forms of development.

Congressman Ackerman believes that energy production and environmental protection do not have to be competing priorities. He will continue to support a balanced energy policy that protects our environment for future generations.

A Commitment To The Land



Congressman Ackerman meeting with Residents for a More Beautiful Port Washington Chairman Myron Blumenfeld and Executive Director Jennifer Rimmer on obtaining possible funds for Port Washington's aquifer, the purchase additional of open space in the community and various beautification issues.

Guardians At The Gate

Congressman Ackerman is spearheading a plan to use retired police officers as security screeners at John F. Kennedy (JFK) International Airport. Under the plan, retired cops and other law enforcement officers would be used in lieu of the current workforce. The available pool of officer's under this proposal would include thousands of fully trained, former law-enforcement personnel in the New York metropolitan area. This would be the first such program in the nation and it would improve the quality of airport security and restore confidence to air travelers since the training and experience of retired officers far exceeds that of present personnel.

This proposal would be a tremendous benefit to air safety, and to the federal government as well. Who wouldn't feel better and safer if the airport screeners were former cops, FBI, secret service officers, customs and corrections officers or retired Port Authority police? These applicants would have had careers of experience with some of the finest law-enforcement agencies in the world, and yet most would only be in their forties. Despite the more than 20 years of experiences and instincts that these individuals would bring to the job, they would still cost the government less money than others. These screeners would be able to draw their pensions from their previous service, in addition to health insurance and other benefits.

The Ackerman proposal is endorsed by the New York Patrolmen's Benevolent



Under the plan Congressman Ackerman is pushing, retired Law Enforcement Officers would take over all screening positions at JFK Airport.

Association (PBA), the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and the General Manager of JFK Airport and the New York Daily News. The decision to grant the pilot project will be made by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Championing Affordable Heath Care

The staggering costs of health insurance and prescription drugs is a major issue for millions of hard working New Yorkers. Throughout his tenure in Congress, Congressman Ackerman has worked hard for quality and affordable health care for the American people. He has supported legislation to ensure that Medicare does not cut reimbursements to the doctors, hospitals and home care providers who treat our children and grandparents. Doctors should not have to cope with further cuts when the reimbursement rate is still far too low.

In the face of the frightening

exodus of Medicare+Choice from New York State, he has cosponsored legislation that would provide these programs with the incentive they need so that the health care we rely on will be there for us.

Prescription drugs are far more expensive than seniors can afford, and action is necessary to rein in these costs so that our nation's seniors can get the medicine they need. Congressman Ackerman has cosponsored the Prescription Drug Fairness for Seniors Act, H.R. 1400, to help relieve seniors of some of the heavy expenses. This

legislation would provide for substantial reductions in the price of prescription drugs to Medicare beneficiaries. It would allow pharmacies to purchase prescription drugs at the average price that the drugs are sold in other developed nations. The legislation has been estimated to reduce prices for brand-name prescription drugs, on average, by 40 percent. At a time when desperate, impoverished grandmothers are cutting pills in half because they cannot afford to buy the proper amount, it is imperative that we reduce drug costs immediately.





Congressman Ackerman with artist Peter Max and Susan Solarz of the U.S. Humane Society announcing the fight to keep in the Farm Bill, the Downed Animal Protection Act, the Congressman's legislation banning the inhumane practice of dragging sick or injured animals into stockyards and selling them for human consumption.

Animals Have Rights Too

U.S. Rep. Gary Ackerman continues his fight in Congress to pass legislation to bring an end to the suffering of defenseless animals and in doing so to protect the public health. Ackerman's Downed Animal Protection bill would ban the widespread but little-known practice of dragging non-ambulatory sick, diseased or injured animals into stockyards where they are sold as food to American families and restaurants.

With the support of over 165 Members of Congress, the Downed Animal Protection provision became the first animal-rights measure to pass Congress in more than 40 years when it was accepted by the House as an amendment to the farm bill.

During the course of Ackerman's 10 year crusade to enact the measure, many responsible fast food chains such as McDonald's, Burger King and Wendy's have refused to purchase meat coming from such sick and abused animals. The Federal School Lunch Program bans the use of such meat for the lunchrooms of our nation's schools. However, unknown to the public, this meat is included on our supermarkets' and butchers' shelves.

This ban would bring an end to the horrendous cruelty and neglect suffered by thousands of animals each year. It would also improve food safety quality by reducing the risks of mad cow disease and other serious illness.

Despite the widespread support of

the Members of the House, of the Senate and of the American public, during the farm bill's conference committee closed door meetings, the Downed Animal Protection provision was substantially gutted.

Profit must no longer be given priority over humane treatment of animals and human health considerations. Representative Ackerman will continue to fight to ensure that this ban is enacted and enforced at the national level.

Ackerman Introduces Bill: To Test For Baby Aids

In America today, over 800,000 people are living with HIV. Each year, hundreds of babies will become infected with HIV. Virtually every one of these children could be prevented from becoming infected with HIV. Since 1994, research studies have demonstrated that medication administered to a pregnant woman during pregnancy and labor (or even to a newborn immediately following birth) can significantly reduce the transmission of HIV from an infected mother to her baby. Ideally every pregnant woman would be tested for HIV during pregnancy and receive appropriate care (including HIV testing) and treatment to take advantage of this medical miracle. But it is not happening.

In New York State, all pregnant women are counseled and advised to be tested for HIV, thanks to the Mayersohn Law. Because not all women receive appropriate prenatal care or may not know their HIV status, all newborns in New York (thanks to Queens Assemblywoman Nettie Mayersohn), are routinely tested for HIV as well, and provided treatment if they have been exposed to the virus. This ensures that every child at risk for HIV born in New York is identified, and no baby is left to slip through the cracks and allowed to become infected with HIV and die from AIDS.

The success of the New York Baby AIDS law has been phenomenal. Since

the law took effect in February 1997, the perinatal HIV transmission rate in the State has dropped from 25 percent to an all time low of 3.5 percent. Over 99 percent of HIV-infected women and their children have received care. This is a policy endorsed by the American Medical Association – the nation's largest doctors' organization – and other groups such as the Children's AIDS Fund.

Congressman Ackerman has introduced legislation that would protect all newborns and their mothers from HIV by requiring universal newborn testing in the United States. We test newborns for syphilis, hepatitis and sickle cell anemia; why shouldn't we test them for HIV?

It would also require that babies and women affected by HIV be linked to appropriate care.

If this policy would have been enacted in 1994, when first proposed nationally by Representative Ackerman, over 3,000 lives could have been saved. Each one of these is a painful and unnecessary tragedy that could have been averted. The means do exist to eliminate Baby AIDS in the United States, and New York has proven that this can be done.

Congressman Ackerman has again introduced legislation to offer counseling and treatment to expectant mothers with HIV. The bill, "Women and Children's HIV Protection Act of 2002", would also provide for universal testing of newborns and medication to fight the infection. By offering the mothers medication, the risks of transmission to the fetus can be greatly reduced. New York State has reduced its' cases of mother-to-child transmission, and the rest of the country should follow suit.

Honoring Our Men Who Served



Congressman Ackerman honoring World War II veterans who served our country in the Normandy campaign. More than 150 former D-Day servicemen from Queens and Long Island were recognized in a formal ceremony at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point.

Cell Phone Safety



Ever drive next to or in back of somebody driving while their talking on their cell phone? Congressman Ackerman introduced the first federal legislation to ban the practice of talking while driving. The measure is now law in New York.





Constituent Services

Congressman Ackerman’s office offers constituents a variety of services:

Case work Do you have a problem with a Federal Agency? Congressman Ackerman’s office can help you by intervening on your behalf. These include matters with the IRS, Social Security Administration, INS, and many other agencies.

Flag Requests Many people like to request flags that have flown over the Capitol Building for a number of purposes, including funerals, special events, and veteran’s ceremonies. Congressman Ackerman can obtain a flag for you for these purposes.

Congressional Internships Congressman Ackerman’s offices in New York and Washington, D.C. offer high school and college students limited opportunities to serve as interns, usually for academic credit. The experience allows students to learn first hand about Congress & the U.S. government.

Academy Nominations Congressman Ackerman can help you if you are interested in attending a United States Service Academy such as West Point or the Naval, Air Force or Merchant Marine Academy. Each year, members of Congress nominate interested students who are constituents to each of the academies.

Financial Aid Information Is there life after High School? Find out by obtaining from Congressman Ackerman’s office, information about how to apply for financial aid for college, trade school and other opportunities.

Tailgate Office



As a result of the anthrax scare, Congressman Ackerman set up a tailgate office outside the Capitol during the closure of the House office buildings. The makeshift office, shown here with several staff members, symbolized that despite the interruption, Congress remained open for business as usual. Although mail delivery to United States Capitol offices has resumed since the anthrax, the delivery process is still very slow and not yet back to normal. The best way to contact the office is by e-mail at and click on Contact Gary link.

Ackerman Art Contest



Congressman Ackerman at Roslyn’s Nassau County Museum of Art congratulating Great Neck North High School student Stephanie Adamowicz, winner of his 2002 art contest, which consisted of entry’s from 44 Queens and Long Island high schools. Stephanie’s artwork will be displayed for one full year in a special corridor of the U.S. Capitol.

Sarah Hughes Honored

Congressman Ackerman presenting his constituent, Sarah Hughes with an American flag flown over the U.S. Capitol in her honor for her gold medal win in the women’s Olympic figure skating competition. The presentation was made with Senators Charles Schumer and Hilary Clinton at an event her hometown of Great Neck held to congratulate her.



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